1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

the household of the headman Sikilile, who had had four wives and one young Esele concubine. At the time of my last visit (1936), however, there were only two wives and the concubine, one wife having died, and another having gone to her people.

To complete the picture of the villagers, their numbers were as follows:

Village	Men	Women	Children		Total
			Male	Female	
In Sikilile's village . .	24	35	31	37	127
In Ciyanda . . .	5	8	2	4	19
In Kanjengo . . .	3	6	3	1	13
At the School . . .	10	11	10	6	37
Total . . .	42	60	46	48	
	Adults: 102		Children: 94[1]		196

In Sikilile's village there were domestic animals as follows: 9 head of cattle, 13 goats, 20 sheep, 100 pigs, and about 100 chickens. There was practically no professional specialization; there were almost no specialists living in the village: no blacksmith or carpenter, no mat-maker, but only one 'hunter of meat', and three 'hunters of (bee-) hives'. As to the women, all could make baskets, and there were several who had made pottery, but were not doing so at the time.

Pigs, chickens, and dogs roamed the village, functioning as a D.S.C. and a sewer system combined. Were it not for these scavengers the villages of the Ovimbundu would present an even more untidy spectacle than is the case. There is no other regular disposal of refuse, nor are there any latrines or privies.[2]

It will be seen that there is practically no division of labour as between households: each is practically a self-contained unit. The

[1] It was reported that in addition to the children then living, these same households had lost 57 by death (29 males and 28 females).

[2] At Ngendo the school village had two or three enclosed pit privies. The Umbundu euphemism for defecate, 'go to the bush' (*oku enda kusenge*), is revealing. Even more revealing is a proverb which advises one not to burn his bridges behind him, but literally it runs as follows:

Nda we livinga huti, Si endi konyima onjo,
Nda o ka sililã pi?

If you forswear yourself saying, I shall not go behind the house,
Then will you go (to) urinate where?

There is a more shocking version which, however, may not be really authentic.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

hood was a day when he and an elder brother set off for the fields and almost ran into a party of raiders. The scolding which they received was not forgotten.

The practice of leaving the *ocisembe* in the village by day makes his elder sibling responsible for much of his education. This is the beginning of a close bond which lasts through life. She herself may not be more than six or seven years old and consequently cannot be expected to 'educate' her little charge very thoroughly. She interests herself in his walking and talking and he will imitate her in many things, but the rest of 'conscious education' must be attended to by the parents.

Cleanliness. Instruction in cleanliness begins at this age, but I fear that it is lacking either in intensity or in persistence for its effect seems to be rather long-delayed. Small babies are not washed very often but their bodies and heads are anointed with palm-oil against infestation with the various parasites of the tropics. Anointing the body continues to be a part of the toilet of the Ocimbundu through life. When palm-oil is scarce, such afflictions as common itch are more prevalent. Nowadays, in the well-appointed household, the *ocisembe* has his hands and face washed before breakfast. If such a connexion between washing and eating were always and everywhere maintained, habits of personal cleanliness might be more widespread. Brushing the teeth may be begun in imitation of mother. Sphincter training is begun very early, for the mother feels every muscular movement made or attempted by the baby on her back. Hence she is apt to know when it is necessary to take him down for defecation. If and when this procedure is followed through with regularity and persistence early sphincter control may be established, but too often this is not the case. Establishment of bladder control is apt to come even more uncertainly as a favourite proverb concerning the weather indicates:

Ilu lia soka ndetako lioñaña.
The sky is like the bottom of a baby.

The Ovimbundu do not associate these bodily functions with shame to the extent which is the case in our culture, but euphemisms are used in place of the exact terminology.[1] If an

[1] There are prohibitions regarding these functions during visits to relatives-in-law with whom one has respect-relations, also to the bride during the wedding ceremonies. (See Folk-tales nos. 12 and 13 of the short collection in the *Journal*

1: Childl M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

863 *ociumbe* defecates on the bed he will be slapped that he may not repeat, but less flagrant breaches do not seem to call for punishment.

868 *Language.* The progress of toddlers in language mastery is rapid. Some mispronunciations are allowed. Some children pronounce correctly more rapidly than do others. Correct use of the language including mastery of the complicated grammatical structure, however, is mastered much earlier than is the case with English-speaking children. One could almost say as does Father Van Wing of the Kongo child: 'À quatre ans il parle mieux sa belle langue Kikongo, qu'un Européen de douze ans ne parle la sienne.'[1] The baby's earliest babblings, as well as his later evident imitations of his elders, are all recognized as his attempts at self-expression which as a matter of course will straighten themselves out in due time.[2] Parents speak to their children in a tone distinctly different from that employed in ordinary adult conversation, but they rarely if ever use the baby's own mispronunciations or 'baby-talk' as do Europeans and Americans. This, and the fact that young children have much more practice than have our children, owing to the constant companionship of their elders, seems to be the secret of their rapid progress. Whether the nature of the language itself has any effect would be an interesting subject for investigation.

867 *Manners* are also taken on quickly during this time. Toddlers are not expected to practise any very wide range of the social niceties, but what they do, they do correctly. They give and receive with both hands. They both give and answer greetings with proper terms of respect. An outsider, however, can rarely observe such behaviour naturally in the young child. He has been so

606 514 *of the American Folk-Lore Society*, vol. xxxv, pp. 129 ff.) The terms used are as follows:

Exact terms	*Euphemisms*
To urinate, *oku sũsã* (urine, *ocisũ*)	*oku talamililho*, lit. 'to stand to something'.
	oku litapela, lit. 'to water oneself' (said of a child when it wets itself or its bed).
To defecate, *oku nia* (faces, *enĩña*)	*oku enda kuzenge*, lit. 'to go to the bush'.
	oku enda kofeko, lit. 'to go to the country'.

The verb *oku nia* is used as a strong or profane expletive or interjectory phrase, especially in the first person with *etaili* (to-day), as *Etaili ndo nia.* The verb is customarily left off.

Etudes Bakongo, p. 262.

Cf. the proverb: *Wa sema, wa imba: wa tumbuka, wa papia*, 'He misbehaves, he sings: he babbles, he speaks.'